

LAKE CO. COMPREHENSIVE STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE**PROJECT BACKGROUND**

In accordance with 55 ILCS 5/5-1062, SMC's principal duties include developing, coordinating the implementation of, and directing the revision of a comprehensive countywide plan for managing stormwater runoff and mitigating the effects of urbanization on stormwater infrastructure in Lake County.

In 1990, the Lake County Stormwater Management Planning Committee, predecessor to the Lake County Stormwater Management Commission, developed the first Lake County Comprehensive Stormwater Management Plan. The 1990 Plan defined the County's stormwater management goals and objectives; assessed the institutional, financial, and regulatory conditions of the County's existing stormwater management programs; reviewed, in a cursory manner, the County's stormwater management needs; and, provided a framework for creating and maintaining a coordinated, countywide stormwater management program.

A fundamental principle of the coordinated, countywide stormwater management program described in the 1990 Plan was preserving the authority and responsibility of local municipalities, drainage districts, townships, and other entities to manage their own stormwater infrastructure while at the same time ensuring that stormwater management is conducted in a consistent and coordinated manner across the County. The key to such a program, the 1990 Plan implied, is a single government entity (i.e., SMC) that coordinates and partners with all these groups to reduce inefficiencies, redundancies, and confusion in managing stormwater runoff and mitigating the effects of urbanization on stormwater infrastructure. The 1990 Plan stated that, under this "partnership approach," SMC was to function as a technical resource to the various municipalities, drainage districts, townships, and other entities responsible for stormwater management in Lake County and be responsible for coordinating the County's coordinated, countywide stormwater management program. It is under this general framework that SMC continues to operate today.

The 1990 Plan also provided SMC with its first Strategic Plan, providing basic guidance on the development of the policies, programs, and services needed for it to fulfill its role in the implementation of the County's coordinated, countywide stormwater management program. The Strategic Plan served SMC well in the early years of its existence, defining its general roles and responsibilities and outlining a framework for the development of its programs and services, but was based on a number of assumptions regarding tasks, schedules, resources, conditions, and costs, which, as time went by, became either outdated or invalid. That prompted SMC to update the Plan in 2002.

The 2002 Plan provided background on the process used to update the Plan; summarized SMC's existing programs and services; outlined, in a cursory manner, the county's existing stormwater management needs; described SMC's potential future programs and services; outlined the costs associated with SMC's potential future programs and services; and, provided SMC with a ten-year action plan. The 2002 Plan continued to emphasize the "partnership approach" and the benefits of combining SMC's ability and authority to coordinate stormwater management activities across the County with local government autonomy for managing local stormwater infrastructure.

Since that time, the 2002 Plan has served SMC well by providing guidance and information to help it carry out its mission of providing desired community services toward the County's primary stormwater management goals of flood damage reduction and surface water quality improvement. However, as the County continues to grow, stormwater management issues continue to arise, and the discipline of stormwater management continues to evolve, it is important to periodically review and update the Plan – every 10 years or so – to ensure that the Plan continues to provide a relevant framework for the County's coordinated, countywide stormwater management program. This year, more than a decade removed from the last update, SMC is undertaking an important effort to update and revise the Plan.